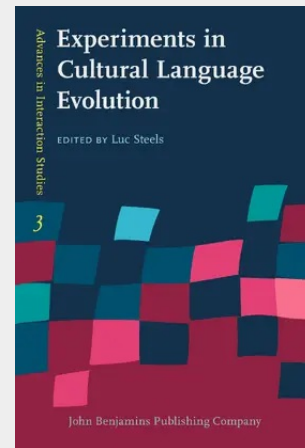


Experiments in Cultural Language Evolution

The fascinating question of the origins and evolution of language has been drawing a lot of attention recently, not only from linguists, but also from anthropologists, evolutionary biologists, and brain scientists. This groundbreaking book explores the cultural side of language evolution. It proposes a new overarching framework based on linguistic selection and self-organization and explores it in depth through sophisticated computer simulations and robotic experiments. Each case study investigates how a particular type of language system can emerge in a population of language game playing agents and how it can continue to evolve in order to cope with changes in ecological conditions. Case studies cover on the one hand the emergence of concepts and words for proper names, color terms, names for bodily actions, spatial terms and multi-dimensional words. The second set of experiments focuses on the emergence of grammar, specifically case grammar for expressing argument structure, functional grammar for expressing different uses of spatial relations, internal agreement systems for marking constituent structure, morphological expression of aspect, and quantifiers expressed as articles. The book is ideally suited as study material for an advanced course on language evolution and it will be of interest to anyone who wonders how human languages may have originated.



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